***Friendly Disclaimer:* It should be obvious, but in the current age of outrage it seems wise regardless to clarify the intention of this article. This article is not a rejection of Evolutionary Socialism in favour of Revolutionary Socialism, but merely a critique of Evolutionary Socialism’s century-long determined avoidance in engaging with its’ intrinsic moral hazard (namely due to the continued dominance of Bernstein’s original essay in informing and guiding modern Evolutionary Socialist thought to the almost exclusion of any other work). In the wake of new accelerationist arguments as a response to Donald Trump and other right-wing populist movements, it would be wise for Evolutionary Socialists to embrace this hazard and defend it with science and reason.**

[INSERT EXPLANATION OF EDUARDO BERNSTEIN AND EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM]

Bernstein makes a reasoned rejection of “the hopelessness of the worker” that is hard to oppose, but he seems to intentionally avoid defending the potential moral hazard intrinsic in his beliefs that should be glaringly obvious to any devout socialist.

The world, in the socialist perspective, is unjust. Gradual improvement to the lives of the worker may be welcome – an increase in wages, reduction in the length of the work week, improvements to occupational safety and other workplace conditions, a disability pension for those injured at work, sick pay, holiday pay, maternity/paternity leave, etc. But these are all concessions that bring the world closer to justice. They enable us to approach a more just world, but never reach it.

The reality is that the worker is still denied ownership over their production. The industrial process is not democratised, the worker is still disenfranchised and denied participation in the controlling bodies of the things they have built. They are still exploited, and they still suffer – merely less so.

It stands to reason then that engaging in behaviours that prolong this state of affairs – continue this suffering for longer than is necessary is immoral.

Gradual improvements in the life of the worker, as they are understood by Bernstein and certainly as they can be perceived today, disable the militancy of the worker. No matter how much work is done to increase the awareness of the working class to their plight, they are placated and soothed into inaction by gradual and slow-moving concession. In that sense Evolutionary Socialism is mutually exclusive with Revolutionary Socialism.

Perhaps the inevitable product of such concessions is a state of being so close to a socialist utopia we may as well consider it one. But it should have been clear then, and certainly is now, that what Bernstein defined as the slow “sin by procrastination” of the legislator necessarily means this change will occur over centuries. And it’s entirely possible the diminishing nature of evolutionary gains ensures we never reach such a point, and all gains we ever realise are superficial remedies that obfuscate the truly repugnant antagonisms of the capitalist system. Bernstein pretends to address this in the dying embers of page 2 of his original essay, but instead gracefully dances away from the tension by (successfully) critiquing the ideological formation of Marx’s ideas.

Let us take Evolutionary Socialism at its best and assume it will indeed eventually lead to total emancipation of the worker, and true equality. If we could have achieved that change sooner by violent revolution, we need to evaluate how long workers were compelled to suffer in truly horrid conditions, compared to how long workers were compelled to suffer in slightly better conditions, multiply it by the expected rate of success of any total revolution, and determine if Evolutionary Socialism is actually causing more harm to the worker on net.

This is a calculus Bernstein studiously avoided, and without appropriately addressing it becomes impossible to assess his moral claims on the repugnancy of accelerationism.